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SUBJECT: ISRAELI DEFENSE MINISTER CAUTIONS ARMS INDUSTRY ON
CHINA TIES

Classified By: Ambassador Daniel C. Kurtzer; Reasons: 1.4 (B) and (D).

1. (S) Israeli Defense Ministry Director General Amos Yaron told the Ambassador on March 24 that Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz had strongly cautioned representatives from Israeli defense firms about ties with China. According to Yaron, Mofaz said that senior MOD approval is required before Israeli companies can propose or enter into any deal with China for military or dual-use items that could be interpreted as being for military purposes. Yaron said that he sends the same message to Israeli companies "every day," but that industry needed to hear it from the minister himself in light of current sensitivities with the USG.

2. (U) The Israeli press reported on March 22 that Mofaz insisted on formal approval by the MOD of "every commercial contract, anticipated sale or even visits by representatives of the defense industry companies to China." The article said that these provisions also apply to civilian equipment manufactured by Israeli defense firms. The article quoted Mofaz as saying, "we have made a commitment to the U.S. and I have no intention of breaking it."

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KURTZER